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Donovan Spurs Effort to Free Cuba Captives

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NEW YORK, Dec. 14 (AP).

James B. Donovan, encouraged by President Kennedy and joined by the American Red Cross, said yesterday he hopes to win freedom for Cuban invasion prisoners by Christmas.

The Cuban missile crisis had stalled his efforts to swap medicines, medical supplies and baby food to Premier Fidel Castro for release of the 1,113 invaders held in Cuban prisons.

Castro had demanded \$2 million ransom, but Mr. Donovan said no cash is involved.

"I'm optimistic of being able to accomplish this by Christmas," said Mr. Donovan, the Wall Street attorney who arranged the exchange of Col. Rudolf Abel, Soviet master spy, for Francis Gary Powers, American U-2 pilot.

"We have had to wait until we got assurance that what was being done was in no way inconsistent with national policy," Mr. Donovan said. Mr. Kennedy gave that assurance at a news conference yesterday

when he indorsed Mr. Donovan's objectives.

Yesterday, the Red Cross announced in Washington that it was participating in seeking the release of the men captured at the abortive Bay of Pigs invasion in April, 1961. Mr. Donovan said this support gives "tremendous impetus" to the movement.

The Red Cross said it was collecting supplies from United States manufacturers for shipment to Cuba and would provide welfare services to any Cuban prisoners released to the United States.